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LETTER DATED 24 AUGUST 1998 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF IRAQ TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

On instructions from my Government, I have the honour to transmit to you herewith the text of the letter dated 24 August 1998 addressed to you by Mr. Tariq Aziz, Deputy Prime Minister, concerning the statements by Mr. Richard Butler, Executive Chairman of the Special Commission, reproduced in the 23 August 1998 issue of The New York Times.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Nizar HAMDOON
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

Annex

Letter dated 24 August 1998 from the Deputy Prime Minister of Iraq addressed to the President of the Security Council

In its 23 August 1998 issue, the United States newspaper The New York Times reproduced a statement by Mr. Richard Butler, Executive Chairman of the Special Commission, in which he made a number of false assertions as part of his policy of misleading the Security Council and world public opinion. In one blatant example of the kind of falsehoods that he puts about concerning what has actually been achieved in the disarmament sphere pursuant to resolution 687 (1991), Mr. Butler says in the interview with Paul Lewis that he suspects that Iraq might be modifying its Volga and Al Samoud missiles to give them a range of more than 150 kilometres, which is prohibited by the Security Council.

In this connection, I should like to state the following:

1. Since the monitoring provided for under resolution 715 (1991) began in late 1993, Iraq has fulfilled its obligation to submit periodic declarations concerning all activities, including those related to missiles.

2. Since that time, all missile-related activities subject to monitoring have been covered, including those related to the Al Samoud missile (which has a range of less than 150 kilometres and which Iraq is therefore authorized under resolution 687 (1991) to manufacture), work on which had begun over two years previously, and the form on the basic design of that missile has been submitted and then updated, as is the case for all the other declarations, every six months and whenever the need has arisen.

3. As requested by the Special Commission, in addition to the six-monthly declaration, in mid-1997 Iraq began to submit monthly status declarations for all the control and support sites of missile-related activities. These forms give a detailed inventory of all missile components, including those for the Al Samoud missile, manufactured, tested or assembled at these sites.

4. Iraq submits the forms required under the declaration mechanism for in-flight missile tests and specific tests on the engines of missiles subject to monitoring, including the Al Samoud missile, and the Special Commission's monitoring teams are present at these tests and photograph and film them. Monitoring teams are also in the habit of verifying the range of missiles during in-flight testing, using helicopters to record the GPS coordinates of their points of launching and landing.

5. Cameras installed at the workshops where the main missile systems are produced and tested monitor these facilities visually and transmit images to the monitoring centre in Baghdad. Moreover, the Special Commission's monitoring teams visit these sites constantly. The Commission has persistently made a point of strengthening the monitoring team and increasing its size as the time for the in-flight testing of the Al Samoud missile drew near, and the team visits the assembly site where the missile is prepared for launch tests on a daily basis. The Commission's inspection teams and monitoring teams have made

over 700 visits to all the sites involved in missile-related activities since the Al Samoud missile programme began.

6. Volga ground-to-air missiles are subject to monitoring by the Special Commission through labels affixed to their control systems, and cannot therefore be modified without the Special Commission's knowledge. Furthermore, the monitoring teams conduct random, unannounced inspections, in the course of which they regularly check the labels affixed to missiles to make sure that the latter have not been modified.

It is highly regrettable that the Executive Chairman of the Special Commission has repeatedly taken blatant steps of this kind and that neither the Security Council nor the Secretary-General has acted to put a stop to this way of proceeding, despite the fact that such conduct is grossly incompatible with the behaviour that is expected of international civil servants and is a deliberate and one-sided attempt to be provocative and to foment crises. It is quite obvious that the Executive Chairman, and certain elements in the Special Commission whose identity is known to everyone, are doing this in order to maintain the embargo against Iraq and to serve the interests of a certain country, and that they are therefore entirely to blame for all the crises that arise.

We hope that the Security Council will put a stop to this tendentious approach, that it will acknowledge that Iraq has fulfilled all the requirements of section C of resolution 687 (1991) and will proceed to lift the iniquitous embargo, beginning with the implementation of paragraph 22 of that resolution.

(Signed) Tariq AZIZ
Deputy Prime Minister